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STEVENSON AND THE CLASSICS<sup>1</sup>

When A. W. Mahaffy (*Spectator* 75:762) examined Stevenson's library in Samoa and found "dry Bohns" lording it over living Homer he was shocked at the novelist's scholarship. Not so Stevenson. "I am sorry indeed that I have no Greek, but I should be sorrier still if I were dead," he observes in *Memories and Portraits*. Then with the glee of a boy he tells how he obtained a certificate from Professor Blackie.

Of his Latin Graham Balfour says (*Life*, II, 122): "He had never mastered the grammar of the language, and to the end made the most elementary mistakes." Yet he was not deterred from adorning his pages in moderation with Latin phrases, classical and legal, adding quaintness, preciosity, verisimilitude, or tone at will to his style—and that with security. For he presented his work for criticism to Sidney Colvin, who furnished "such technical hints as a classical training and five years seniority" enabled him to give. "*Tibi, Palinure,*" Colvin says, Introduction to the *Vailima Letters*, "So, in the last weeks of his life, he proposed to inscribe to me a set of his collected works. Not Palinurus so much as Polonius may perhaps—or so much I sometimes suspect—have been really the character." In Letter V of the collection, however, Stevenson illustrates Colvin's point. He is writing apropos of "some Hawaiian stuff." "Is something of this sort practicable for the dedication?" he asks.

"Terra Marique  
Per Pericula Per Ardua  
Amicae Comiti  
D.D.  
Amans Viator."

" 'Tis a first shot concocted this morning in my berth: I had always before tried them in English, which insisted on being either insignificant or fulsome: I cannot think of a better word than *comes*, there being not the shadow of a Latin book on board; yet sure there is some other. Then *viator* (though it *sounds* all right) is doubtful; it has too much, perhaps, the sense of wayfarer? Last, will it mark sufficiently that I mean my wife? And first, how about blunders? I scarce wish it longer."

<sup>1</sup> Read before the Philological Association of Stanford University, November Meeting, 1913.

So much, at this point, for his scholarship: we pass to his criticism of classical authors. "What genuine student of literature would exchange for a wilderness of abstract categories the letters in which Fitzgerald communicates the thrill of his literary admirations?" asks Professor Shorey in *Classical Literature and Learning*. So it is, though in a far lesser degree, with Stevenson. Moreover, what he read and what he thought of his reading is now tabulated in the inaugural dissertation of Dr. Kurt Mandel: *Die Belesenheit von Robert Louis Stevenson mit Hinweisen auf die Quellen seiner Werke*, Kiel, 1912. Pages 94-99 are devoted to Greek and Latin writers, of whom Homer, Aesop, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Plato, Theophrastus and Euclid represent the Greeks; and Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Petronius, Martial, Cicero, Livy, Tacitus, Marcus Aurelius, St. Augustine, Thomas à Kempis and Christian Thomasius the Latins. The order here is Dr. Mandel's.

His criticism of Greek literature is not extensive. Homer shows "justice and completeness of description which gives us the very physiognomy of nature, in body and detail, as nature is" (*Men and Books*); the *Odyssey* is "the best of romances"; "Achilles shouting over against the Trojans, Ulysses bending the great bow, . . . each has been printed on the mind's eye forever." Aesop "was the man to know the world" (*Travels with a Donkey*). Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Sophocles' tragedies are "noble work" in Professor Lewis Campbell's translation (Letter to Colvin); the "Oedipus Rex is a miracle". . . Voltaire was powerless "to exhibit one flaw in this masterpiece. For the drama, it is perfect; though such a fable in a romance might make the reader crack his sides." Plato's *Phædo* is read in translation (*Vailima Letters*), without comment. Lastly, "Stevenson spricht von dem 'characters of Theophrastus' (Memoirs and Portraits), über die er auf John Addingtons Anraten schreiben sollte (Art of Writing)," says Mandel, p. 96.

Latin Literature receives more attention. "I am not sure that Virgil was not more to him than any other poet, ancient or modern," says Balfour (II, 122). In 1886 he read the fifth and sixth *Aeneid*, "the latter for the first time". . . . "That is one of the most astounding pieces of literature, or rather it contains the best, I have ever met with," he declares, in March. Writing to Henry James in 1889 of his much-prized letter from the Chief Rui, he says, "I would rather have received it than have written *Red-gauntlet* or the Sixth *Aeneid*." In December of 1887 he had written

Colvin: "I am at the seventh book of the *Aeneid*, and quite amazed at its merits (also very often floored by its difficulties). The Circe passage at the beginning, and the sublime business of Amata with the simile of the boy's top—O Lord, what a happy thought! have especially delighted me."

Of Horace he says, a trifle unjustly: "I had a Horace with me and read a little; but Horace, when you try to read him fairly under the open heaven, sounds urban, and you find something of the escaped townsman in his descriptions of the country" (*Letters*, I, Nov. 1873). Later (Nov. 1887) he praises Horace, Martial, Burns and others for their success in informal writing: "Horace is much a speaker, and see how popular!" Of Ovid, Mandel says, "Graham Balfour erinnert sich, wie Stevenson eine Stelle Ovids in 'Scotch like octosyllabics' schrieb, aber dabei Ungeduld zeigte über 'the trammels of verse.'" Petronius, realist, wit and Roman novelist, Stevenson did not appreciate. He writes to Colvin, March 9, 1884: "I have also read Petronius Arbiter, which is a rum work, not so immoral as most modern works, but singularly silly"—an amazing judgment today, considering the interest we feel in classical fiction, thanks to Abbott, Peck, Foster, and others. Martial he admired next to Virgil: "If but some Roman would return from Hades (Martial for choice!)," he says, (*Technical Elements of Style in Literature*). "Yet surely Herrick in his true vein is superior to Martial himself, though Martial is a very pretty poet." (Letter to Colvin, March 9, 1884). Again, "I cannot conceive a person who does not love his Martial" (Letter to J. A. Symonds, December 6, 1887). In *Books That Have Influenced Me*: "Martial is a poet of no good repute, and it gives a man new thoughts to read his work dispassionately, and find in this unseemly jester's serious passages the image of a wise, kindly and self-respecting gentleman. It is customary, I suppose, in reading Martial, to leave out these pleasant verses; I never heard of them, at least, until I found them for myself; and this partiality is one among a thousand things that help to build up our distorted and hysterical conception of the great Roman Empire."

Stevenson praises Cicero's style. "I am tempted to mention Cicero," he says, *Technical Elements of Style in Literature*, p. 249; "and since Mr. Anthony Trollope is dead, I will. It is a poor diet for the mind, a very colorless and toothless 'criticism of life'; but we enjoy the pleasure of a pattern 'every stitch a model at once of

elegance and good sense." Of Livy he read several books, but was forced to abandon him because his own writing was beginning to be influenced unduly by the great Roman's. He also read Tacitus—"with a French crib"—which he found more "classical" than the original. "I liked the war part," he says; "but the dreary intriguing at Rome was too much." In *Technical Elements of Style in Literature*, 247, he finds Tacitus inferior to Cicero in the web or pattern of writing. In *The English Admirals* he tells with enthusiasm the story of Germanicus and the Roman birds. As for many frequenters of the ale houses: "If you told them about Germanicus and the eagles, or Regulus going back to Carthage, they would be likely to fall asleep; but tell them about Harry Pearce and Jew Belcher"—etc. In *A Christmas Sermon* he says: "There is a tale in Tacitus of how the veterans mutinied in the German wilderness; of how they mobbed Germanicus, clamouring to go home; and of how, seizing their general's hand, these old war-worn exiles passed his finger along their toothless gums."

Of Marcus Aurelius he says, "He was happy in the detested camp" (Letter to J. A. Symonds, spring, 1886), and in *Books That Have Influenced Me* of the *Meditations*, "The dispassionate gravity, the noble forgetfulness of self, the tenderness of others, that are there expressed and were practised on so great a scale in the life of the writer, make this book a book quite by itself. No one can read it and not be moved. . . . When you have read, you carry away with you a memory of the man himself; it is as though you had touched a loyal hand, looked into brave eyes and made a noble friend." Finally, he says of the *Confessions of St. Augustine* (Letter to Colvin, March 9, 1884), "The first chapters are marked by a commanding genius: Shakespearean in depth. I was struck dumb, but alas! when you begin to wander into controversy, the poet drops out. His description of infancy is most seizing. And how is this: 'Sed majorum nugae negotia vocantur; puerorum autem talia cum sint puniuntur a majoribus.' (Book I) Which is quite after the heart of R. L. S. See also his splendid passage about the 'luminosus limen amicitiae' and the 'nebulae de limosa concupiscentia carnis'; going on: 'Utrumque in confuso aestuabat et rapiebat imbecillam aetatem per abrupta cupiditatum' (Book II). That *utrumque* is a real contribution to life's science. Lust alone is but a pygmy; but it seldom attacks us single-handed."

We turn to Stevenson's artistic employment of antiquity. For he caught the antique spirit; he celebrated Youth, the gods and Pan; and he used classical authors by name, title and content of works for modern instances.

If English Literature is ultimately divisible into Hellenism and Hebraism, as Professor Moulton declares in *World Literature*, Stevenson combined both elements in himself. He "would rise up out of his grave to preach," he was "something of a shorter catechist"; yet the healthy Greek spirit was born in him and remained with him to the end. To escape from northern fog into southern sunshine; to exchange spiritual gloom for physical and mental warmth and light; to live in the open air; to wander curiously about the world—these were Greek characteristics in him, (romantic, the romanticist would say), strengthened, on the other hand, by that moral seriousness, that care for conduct, that understanding, respect and love of mankind that marked him as a Hebraist and a Christian.

The dark, the terrible and the fantastic offset the bright, the winsome and the sane in his fiction, as mediæval aspects of his eclectic genius, and modern melancholy creeps into his later essays; but in his early travels and travel books the youth of the world lives again, a Golden Age of joyous nymphs and fauns.

We quote from *Travels with a Donkey*: "For some thoughts, which surely would be the most beautiful, vanish before we can rightly see their features; as though a god, travelling by our green highways should ope the door, give one smiling look into the house and go again forever. Was it Apollo, or Mercury, or Love with folded wings? Who can say? But we go the lighter about our business, and feel peace and pleasure in our hearts." And from *An Inland Voyage*: "When I think of the slim and lovely maidens running the woods all night to the note of Diana's horn; moving among the old oaks, as fancy-free as they; things of the forest and the starlight, not touched by the commotion of man's hot and turbid life—although there are plenty of other ideals that I should prefer—I find my heart beat at the thought of this one."

He emphasizes the Greek spirit in Fleeming Jenkin. "'The Greeks made the best plays and the best statues, and were the best architects: of course, they were the best of tailors, too,' said he; and was never weary, when he could find a tolerant listener, of dwelling on the simplicity, the economy, the elegance both of means

and effect, which made their system so delightful. . . . He loved the jovial Heracles, loved the astute Odysseus, not the Robespierres and Wesleys." Again, "It was no wonder if he loved the Greeks; he was in many ways a Greek himself; he would have loved Socrates, and done battle with him stoutly, and manfully owned his defeat; and the dialogue, arranged by Plato, would have shone even in Plato's gallery. He seemed in talk aggressive, petulant and full of a singular energy. He was a Greek sophist, a British schoolboy."

There seems more than parallelism, too, between Stevenson's eulogy in his letters at twenty-five of the three great women from the East Pediment of the Parthenon, and his description at the end of his life in *Weir of Hermiston* of Kirstie. Of the first, he says, "I can conceive a great mythical woman, living alone among inaccessible mountain-tops or in some lost island of the pagan seas, and ask no more. Whereas if I hear of a Hercules, I ask after Iole or Dejanira. I cannot think him a man without women. But I can think of these three deep-breasted women, living out all their days on remote hilltops, seeing the white dawn and the purple even, and the world outspread before them forever." And Kirstie, who "seemed young with the youth of goddesses," he describes as "now over fifty; and she might have sat to a sculptor. Long of limb and still light of foot, deep-breasted, robust-loined, her golden hair not yet mingled with any trace of silver, the years had but caressed and embellished her. She seemed destined to be the bride of heroes and the mother of their children, and behold, by the iniquity of fate, she had passed through her youth alone."

There are Greek passages on youth; in *Underwoods*, XI, To Will H. Low, for example:

"Youth now flees on feathered foot,  
Faint and fainter grows the flute,  
Rare songs of gods; and still  
Somewhere on the sunny hill,  
Or along the winding stream,  
Through the willows fits a dream;"

while in a letter from Mentone, Nov. 1873, he says, "O Medea kill me, or make me young again."<sup>2</sup> Even as *advocatus et criticus juventatis* we find classical phraseology: "Youth Himself, giant Prometheus, is still ironed on the peaks of Caucasus" (*Memories*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ordered South*: "He (the invalid) will pray for Medea; when she comes let her either rejuvenate or slay."

*and Portraits*), or "It is only to transact some higher business that even Apollo dare play truant to Admetus" (*Familiar Studies of Men and Books*).

Apollo, indeed, is the god he oftenest sings. "Many good things have the gods sent me of late" (Letter to George Meredith, April 17, 1894), and, "I and my companion, methought, walked the street like a couple of gods" (*The Satirist*), he observes more generally; but, "Harsh are the words of Mercury after the songs of Apollo" (*Amateur Emigrant*); "he must corroborate the songs of Apollo by some darkest talk of human metaphysic" (*Familiar Studies of Men and Books*); "The pencils seem to have been Apollo's first experiment in the service of Admetus; but others followed" (*Familiar Studies of Men and Books*); "in a golden zone, like Apollo's" (*Sketches and Criticisms*); "If the Apollo Belvedere should suddenly glow all over into life and step forward from the pedestal with that godlike air of his" (*Virginibus Puerisque*);—all show him celebrating the patron deity of bards. His admiration for the Belvedere and the "figures of necessity," we may add, should be contrasted with his unfavorable opinion at twenty-one of Greek sculpture (Letter to Mrs. Churchill Babington, 1871). In April, 1880, he writes to Colvin for a good book of mythology. "If I recover," he says, "I feel called on to write a volume of gods and demigods in exile: Pan, Jove, Cybele, Venus, Charon, etc.; and though I should like to take them very free, I should like to know a little about them to begin with." His plan was never carried out. But in *Virginibus Puerisque* he speaks of "Iris as she went abroad over the land on some Olympian errand"; and in the same of Love who "at last wakes and looks about him," recalling Eros himself enchain'd. Other mythological references are varied in intent; all of them are apt; none are overstrained; and they are limited in number. They follow: "The Greeks would have made a noble myth of such a one" (*A Plea for Gas Lamps*); "We sit at this board below the sword of Damocles" (*New Arabian Nights*); "A whip-bearing Olympus of mankind" (*Memories and Portraits*); "A newer and ruder Amphion" (*In the South Seas*); "Such a colossus of a man" (*Letters*); "I would rather tackle the Gaetulian lion" (*Travels with a Donkey*); "Still like a brook your page has shone, And your ink sings of Helicon" (*To Andrew Lang: Underwoods*); "You and Barrie and Kipling are my Muses three" (Letter to Henry James); "Once again, O thou Orpheus and Hera-

cles, the bard And the deliverer, touch the stops again" (*To W. E. Henley: Underwoods*).

We hear much of Pan.<sup>3</sup> "To Youth and all ductile and congenial minds," he says in *Pan's Pipes*, "Pan is not dead, but alone of all the classic hierarchy survives in triumph; goat-footed, with a gleeful and an angry look, the type of the shaggy world; and in every wood, if you go with a spirit properly prepared, you shall hear the sound of his pipe."

To R. A. M. Stevenson, in *Et Tu in Arcadia Vixisti*, he says,

"But chiefly thou

In that clear air took'st life; in Arcady  
The haunted, land of song; and by the wells  
Where most the gods frequent. There Charon old,  
In the Pelethonian antre, taught thee love;  
The plants, he taught, and by the shining stars  
In forests dim to steer. There thou hast seen  
Immortal Pan dance secret in a glade."

"Et ego in Arcadia vixi," he cries of Fointainbleau, and plucks a reed, and writes. But in the *Silverado Squatters*, III, *Napa Wine*, he says, "Some of us, kind old Pagans, watch with dread the shadows falling on the age. . . . It is not Pan only; Bacchus, too, is dead."

He sees Greek qualities in the South Seas. Apropos of *A Foot-note to History* he writes partly in Homeric, partly in Virgilian, partly in modern vein, "Here is, for the first time, a tale of Greeks—Homeric Greeks—mingled with moderns, and all true; Odysseus alongside of Rajah Brooke; proportion *gardée*; and all true. . . . Here is a little tale that has not 'caret'-ed its 'vates'; 'sacer' is another point." *In the South Seas*, again, he says, un-Homerically, "they sing with a certain lustiness and Bacchic glee." Homeric imagery, however, appears in *Youth and Love*: "And paint on foreign lands and skies my Odyssey of battle." "He was an Homeric talker, plain, strong and cheerful," he says of the stow-away in *The Amateur Emigrant*. "By day he would still lay on me endless tasks, which he showed considerable ingenuity to fish up and renew, in the manner of Penelope's web," says the old servitor in the *Master of Ballantrae*. "But even while he sings the

<sup>3</sup>Will H. Low, *A Chronicle of Friendships*, V, Enter R. L. S., says, "I can hardly imagine that any could deny the appeal of the vivacious eyes, the humour or pathos of the mobile mouth, with its lurking suggestion of the great god Pan at times."

songs of the Sirens he still hearkens to the barking of the Sphinx. Jarring Byronic notes interrupt the Horatian flow of his humours," he observes of Opalstein in *Memories and Portraits*, with a striking combination of the Greek, the Latin and the English manners. In *Travels with a Donkey*, again, he speaks of "an isolation, you would think, like that of Homer's Cyclops."

In addition to Homer, Stevenson mentions Aesop, in *The Wrong Box*; Sophocles, in *Travels with a Donkey*, Euclid, in *An Inland Voyage*, *Men and Books*, and *Virginibus Puerisque*; Aristotle, in the *Master of Ballantrae* and *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*; Archimedes, in *St. Ives*; Plutarch, in *Prince Otto*; Lucretius, in *An Inland Voyage*; and Ambrosius, in *Men and Books*. (Mandel, p. 95).

Stevenson displayed a modern attitude towards "the grandeur that was Rome." He neither discountenanced the influence of the Empire on the nations that succeeded it nor failed, by contrast, to appreciate societies resting on other foundations. Balfour (*Life II*) after speaking of the dignity and conciseness Latin afforded his style, and after pointing out that Latin was always a living tongue to him, adds: "But as an influence Rome counted as something very much more than a literature—a whole system of law and empire." Stevenson favored the Army as a career, he came of a family of light house builders, and he was graduated a lawyer; hence Roman soldiering, Roman building and Roman law were as vital to him as Roman letters.

Of Pepys he says (*Familiar Studies of Men and Books*), "Rome was the dream of his life; he was never happier than when he read or talked of the Eternal City." For himself, Stevenson admired the dignity of the Roman character.

"I knew thee strong and quiet like the hills;  
I knew thee apt to pity, brave to endure:  
In peace and war a Roman full equipt,"

he writes (*Underwoods*, Book III, xix To—). Robert Hunter (*Talk and Talkers*) was "staunch as a Roman soldier under his infirmities." "Poor John, (in *Fleeming Jenkin*, 21) when he came to die, died with Stoic cheerfulness." Old Weir of Hermiston, in Lord Glenalmond's words to Archie, "had all the Roman Virtues; Cato and Brutus were such. I think a son's heart might well be proud of an ancestry of such a one." "The doctor still remains to me *probus, doctus, lepidus, jucundus*, a man of books," says Colonel

Gordon, in *Prince Otto*, Book III, Chapter III. In the *Treasure of Franchard* the doctor serves the goddess Hygeia and Mediocrity of Fortune with Horatian constancy. (Cf. "progress and the golden mean" in *A Plea for Gas Lamps*). Again, Roman life after death is vivid in Underwoods, I, 13, "written during a serious sickness":

"I sit and wait a pair of oars  
On Cis-Elysian river-shores,  
Where the immortal dead have sate  
'Tis mine to sit and meditate,  
To reascend life's rivulet  
Without remorse, without regret;  
And sing my *Alma Genetrix*  
Among the willows of the Styx."

Like imagery is used in *Random Memories*, where Stevenson describes a descent in diver's costume: "So must have ineffectually swung, so resented their inefficiency, those light crowds that followed the Star of Hades, and uttered exiguous voices in the land beyond Cocytus."

Among the ancients, Caesar is the figure oftenest on Stevenson's pages. Like Scott and Montaigne, "Caesar did many things. I ought to have been able to build lighthouses and write David Balfour, too. *Hinc illae lacrymae*," he says in a letter to Will H. Low, January 15, 1894. In *The Master of Ballantrae* there is the reference: "a book or two, and those of the best, Caesar's Commentaries, a volume of Mr. Hobbes," etc., while *St. Ives*, 81, parodies Caesar's "Veni, vidi, vici": "I have fought with him, been beaten and run away. *Veni, victus sum, evasi.*" In the *Wrecker*: "I knew that Homer nodded, that Caesar had compiled a jest-book"; also the gratifying thought of "a chance that Caesar could not have given to his son." From Shakespeare or Plutarch are drawn the "portents in Julius Cæsar"; and "Cæsar's body, arousing irritation where it came" (*A Footnote to History*).

The other aspect of his attitude toward Rome, the South Sea viewpoint, is set forth in *In the South Seas*, pp. 7 and 51: "But I was now escaped out of the shadow of the Roman empire, under whose toppling monuments we were all cradled, whose law and letters are on every hand of us constraining and preventing. I was now to see what men might be whose fathers had never studied Virgil, who had never been conquered by Cæsar, and never been ruled by Gaius and Papinian." And "The Polynesians have not

been trained in the bracing political thought of ancient Rome; with them the idea of law has not been disengaged from that of morals or propriety."

We come to Stevenson's artistic use of Roman authors—to Virgil, Livy, Horace and Cicero.

Balfour (II, 117-121) quotes from Stevenson's diary a description of The Bay of Oa, written during his "Odyssey in the South Seas," as Colvin says: "A little gentle insistence produced a smiling acquiescence, and the eight oars began to urge us slowly into a bay of the *Æneid*. Right overhead a conical hill arises; its top is all sheer cliff of a rosy yellow, stained with orange and purple, bristled and ivied with individual climbing trees; lower down the woods are massed; lower again the rock crops out in a steep buttress, which divides the arc of beach. . . . 'Here are the works of all the poets *passim*, I said, and just then my companion stopped. 'Behold an omen,' said he, and pointed. It was a sight I had heard of before in the islands but had not seen: a little tree such as grows sometimes on infinitesimal islets on the reef, almost stripped of its leaves, and covered instead with feasting butterflies. These, as we drew near, arose and hovered in a cloud of blue and silver-grey.'—

"Thursday.—We others withdrew to the next village. Meanwhile I had Virgil's bay all morning to myself, and feasted on solitude and overhanging woods, and the retiring sea. . . . When I was still, I kept Buhak powder burning by me on a stove under the shed, (mosquitoes!) and read Livy, and confused to-day and two thousand years ago, and wondered in which of these epochs I was flourishing at that moment; and then I would stroll out, and see the rocks and the woods, and the arcs of beaches, curved like a whorl in a fair woman's ear, and huge ancient trees jutting high overhead out of the hanging forest, and feel the place at least belonged to the age of fable, and awaited *Æneas* and his battered fleets."

In a letter to Charles Baxter from Dunblane, Friday March 5, 1872 (Colvin I, 30-31) he had already visualized and localized Virgil—the Eclogues this time: "I walked up here this morning (three miles *tu-dieu!* a good stretch for me), and passed one of my favorite spots in the world, and one that I very much affect in spirit when the body is tied down and brought immovably to anchor on a sick-bed. It is a meadow and bank on a corner on the

river, and is connected in my mind inseparably with Virgil's Eclogues. *Hic corulis mistos interconsedimus ulmos*, or something very like that, the passage begins (only I know my short-winded Latinity must have come to grief over even this much of quotation); and here, to a wish, is just such a cavern as Menalcas might shelter himself withal from the bright morn, pipe himself blue in the face, while *Messieurs les Arcadiens* would roll out those cloying hexameters that sing themselves in one's mouth to such a curious lilting chant."

In the *Ebb Tide*, Ch. I, we find: "Two were men of kindly virtues; and one, as he sat and shivered under the *purao*, had a tattered Virgil in his pocket.

"Remember your first view of the island," says Attwater to Herrick, 'and how it was only woods and water; and suppose you had asked somebody for the name, and he had answered, *nemorosa Zacynthos!*"

"*Jam medio appet fluctu!*" exclaims Herrick. "Ye gods! yes, how good!"

Further artistic use of Virgil appears quaintly in the *Master of Ballantrae*, where Mr. Alexander "plays the part of Dido, with curiosity inflamed to hear; and there would be the Master like a diabolical Æneas, full of matter the most pleasing in the world to any youthful ear, such as battles, sea-disasters, flights, the forests of the west, and since his later voyage, the ancient cities of the Indies."

In the *Master of Ballantrae* Stevenson uses Livy. He describes "a room with its family portraits and parqueted ceilings, with pendants, and the carved chimney, in one corner of which my old lord sat reading Livy." In *Kidnapped*, ch. 27, Horace is introduced: "'Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo—do you understand that?' says he with a keen look. 'I will do even as Horace says, sir,' I answered smiling, 'and carry you *in medias res.*'" The dedication to *The Merry Men* echoes Horace Odes, III, 30. "My dear Lady Taylor: To your name, if I wrote on brass, I could add nothing; it has already been written higher than I could dream to reach, by a strong and dear hand." A passage from Cicero, *De Officiis*, I, xx, serves as motto to the *Silverado Squatters*: "Vixerunt nonnulli in agris dilectati re sua familiari. His idem propositum fuit quod regibus, ut ne qua re egerent, ne cui parerent, libertate uterentur: cujus proprium est sic vivere ut

velis." In the chapter, *With the Children of Israel*, Stevenson remarks, "It is really very disheartening how we depend on each other in this life. 'Mihi est propositum,' as you may see by the motto, 'id quod regibus'; and behold it cannot be carried out, unless I find a neighbour rolling in cattle."

Other Latin references are not numerous. In *Kidnapped* David says, "I found a great number of books, with Latin and English, in which I took great pleasure all afternoon." Later in the story (ch. XXVII) David tells his adventures. "Well, well," said the lawyer, when I had quite done, "this is a great epic, a great *Odyssey* of yours. You must tell it, sir, in sound Latinity, when your scholarship is riper, or in English, if you please, though for my part I prefer the stronger tongue. You have rolled much; *quae regio in terris*—what parish in Scotland (to make a homely translation) has not been filled with your wanderings?" Latin grammar is mentioned playfully in *David Balfour*. "You was so particular kind as to introduce me to some of the principles of Latin grammar, a thing which wrote itself profoundly on my gratitude," says Mistress Grant to David. Latin epigraphy is suggested when Stevenson writes to St. Gaudens, May 29, 1893, for "some fine clear type from some Roman monument." The atmosphere of Rome is archæologically conveyed in a story told by the Master of Ballantrae, who speaks of "the moor which lies about Rome"; of ancient Roman tombs; and of a pit "of Roman foundation, and like all that nation set their hand to, built for eternity." Lastly, in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, John Knox and the testimonies of Tertullian, Augustine, Ambrose, Basil, Chrysostom and the Panalects are mentioned.

Latin phrases are distasteful to the present age and are in general banned, except in law and neo-Hegelian philosophy. (See Bosanquet, *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, 1912, where they are much used.) Of Mr. Rankeillor, in *Kidnapped*, Stevenson says, "Indeed he was more pedantic than I can represent him, and placed more scraps of Latin in his speech; but it was all uttered with a fine geniality of eye and manner which went far to conquer my distrust." So it is, we think, with Stevenson. The scraps of Latin in his pages are uttered with much gusto, to use a favorite word of his. In the case of Rankeillor, Stevenson, as a careful artist, quotes just enough of his Latin to convey that side of the old lawyer. In like manner I might show the aptness of his Latin in his other

writings. Horace, Virgil and the Law are his chief sources. I have collected his Latin phrases—varying from some fifty in his collected Letters to fifteen, two or none in other books—which I am not including here. I offer, however, in contrast to his method, two classical references in Quiller-Couch's continuation of *St. Ives*. “My feet trod the carpet to Horace's alcaics”; and “I have the honour to refer you to the inimitable Roman Flaccus.” These are accompanied in each case by careful Horatian quotations, only lacking Book and Ode, but the effect is not Stevensonian. The passages are scholarly, but they want the master hand. They adhere; they do not cohere.

Such was the classicism of Stevenson. Though much given to avoiding the “abhorred pedantic sanhedrim,” he was the first to acknowledge vital service to his Art of scholars and scholarship. Barrie, in his “An Edinburgh Eleven,” significantly places Stevenson in the midst of his partial portraits of Edinburgh professors. To these masters our Apollo played truant, but for cause: he lived “to learn to write.” Later, however, he was refused the chair of History and Constitutional Law at Edinburgh University.

Stevenson's relation to Greek Literature is summed up in a letter to Colvin (December, 1880) in which he speaks of himself as that un-Grecian, that Bohnist who has read his Buckley to good purpose, since he has just converted John Addington Symonds to an appreciation of the *Ajax*. How Aeschylus, and more especially Homer, influenced him we have seen; how the Greek genius, the gods, Pan and the spirit of youth entered into him; how the glory that was Greece shone in his pages—yet always in moderation, not blinding the sight,  $\mu\eta\delta\acute{e}\nu \acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\tau$ . Further we have observed how sure was his feeling for Roman Literature, Archæology and Law, if not for Latin Grammar; how he liked to play with Latin phrases; and how, again, the artist in him worked this completer knowledge of Rome into the texture he so loved to weave—ever again with nice discretion, respecting the golden mean.

Finally, in at least two places the author of *Treasure Island* and *A Gossip on Romance* writes himself down *in propria persona*, a thorough-going realist and “classicist.”<sup>4</sup> In the *Vailima Letters*, May 1892, he says, “With all my romance I am a realist and a prosaist.” And eighteen years before, August 8, 1874, he had

<sup>4</sup> Indeed, if the realist-idealist classification is adopted, Stevenson is a romantic realist.

written to Colvin of the eighteenth century, in admiration of those very qualities of formality and order that are antagonistic to the romantic school. "Chester: I like this place much; but somehow I feel glad when I get among the quiet eighteenth century buildings, in cozy places with some elbow room about them, after the older architecture. This other is bedevilled and furtive; it seems to stoop; I am afraid of trap-doors and could not go pleasantly into such houses. I don't know how much of this is legitimately the effect of architecture; little enough, possibly; possibly for the most part it comes from bad historical novels and the disquieting statuary that garnishes some facades."

Classicism, in short, performed for Stevenson a service necessary to him and to romanticism generally; it restrained, coördinated and concentrated his work, taking its place among those better recognized factors of personal charm, distinctive style, skilful invention and sound character that have coöperated with native genius to place him in his present position in English literature.

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